St. Martinville hosts St. Lucy’s Festival of Lights

by Paris Noel

As the season of lights begins to christen the winter's horizon, one of the brightest ornaments of the Catholic Church of Sicily is remembered for her patronage on Dec. 13. In Rome, during the sixth century, she was honored with other virgin martyrs, and her name was inserted within the Cannon of Mass.

St. Lucy, virgin martyr and patroness of Syracuse, celebrates her feast day as parishioners of St. Martin De Tours Catholic Church honor her with the seasonal tribute: St. Lucy Festival of Lights.

In 1990, Father Keith DuRauen had a vision to honor this saint with a holiday display of light within the town's square. Lucy (Lucia in Italian) derives from the Latin word for "light" and has become the tribute of this divine saint throughout the passage of time.

According to legend, born of honorable and wealthy lineage, Lucy was educated from within the cradle about Christ, while strongly influenced by the divine grace of God. As the garden of maturity blossomed, her sacred vow to celibacy became a divine gift.

This secret, she held close to the chambers of her heart as she reached the age of maturity. Unaware of her sacred promise, Lucy's mother, Eutychia promised the girl's hand in marriage to a young pagan.

St. Lucy Catholic Church in St. Martinville is hosting its yearly Festival of Lights on Dec. 10.

(Steve Comeaux Photo, 1990)

While completing their prayerful visitation to the tomb of St. Agatha, Lucy disclosed her sacred desires of perpetual virginity before returning home. Eutychia, in gratitude, granted her daughter full liberty to pursue her pious inclinations.

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Upon discovering his betrothed's intentions during the sale of her priceless jewels and goods in efforts of even distribution among the less fortunate, the young pagan's rage accused her unfairly before the governor, Paschasius. She was then exposed to prostitution in a brothel house, but God rendered her immovable.

In the year 304, however, Lucy died from wounds rendered at the hands of a Roman soldier. Her eyes then taken from her, she crossed the Jordan to meet her eternal rest. Today, her intercession is particularly implored for distempers of the eyes, while celebrated by parishioners through lighted festivals across the nations of earth.

Today, St. Martinville celebrates the 16th year of St. Lucy's Festival of Lights on the square, and it will be held this year on Dec. 10. A winter's wonderland of magical display will bathe yuletide spectators with holiday joy and peace.

"It has been nine years since I left St. Martinville, and I am delighted to see that the festival has continued throughout the years," said Du Rouen, "and with the same individuals that were there in the very beginning!"